

Ephesians 1:1-14

Introduction: Yielding to the intentions of the master: the trainer, teacher coach or mentor. When the learner yields to the teacher's intentions, both student and teacher succeed.

God does not leave things to chance. We glorify Him the most when we yield to his loving intentions.

- I. We have the right to feel secure about our identity in Christ. 1:1-2
- II. God is glorified by blessing us with every spiritual and heavenly blessing. 1:3-6
- III. Our blessings are all the result of our redemption by the blood of Christ. 1:7-10
- IV. God will be supremely glorified when He gives us our complete inheritance. 1:11-14

- I. We have the right to feel secure about our identity in Christ. 1:1-2

Apostle This highlights Paul's authority which is equal to that of the 12 original apostles.

Saints (the same as "faithful") means "holy ones", "consecrated people". They are people set apart by God that He designates for special purposes.

Grace undeserved favor or "God's Riches At Christ's Expense" Because God's favor toward us is undeserved, we never have to worry about whether we really deserve it. We don't. He wants to give it to us anyway. All we have to do is receive it.

Peace Peace with God has been earned for us by Christ's death on the cross. This peace is not just the absence of conflict. It echoes the OT concept of *shalom*, where a person's life with God and with everything else is in ordered harmony, both physically and spiritually, and "all is well."
(ESV Study Bible)

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- II. God is glorified by blessing us with every spiritual and heavenly blessing. 1:3-6

Election In love He predestined us to adoption as sons (1:4-5 ESV) We are chosen by God. If you are a Christian it is because God chose you. Jesus told His disciples, "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). Yet they all willingly followed Him. When we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, we discover that He chose us. This confuses many people because putting our faith in Christ involves a very real act of our wills. We have to believe in Him and trust in Him intentionally. It's OK if you don't understand Election. I'm not sure anybody really does. But we can benefit from believing it without understanding it.

Possible problem: Some get scared at this point: "What if God didn't choose me?"

Response: Have you trusted in Jesus Christ? If so, then He chose you. If you haven't trusted in Christ, then put your faith in Him today and you'll find out that He chose you too. Jesus said, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." (John 6:37)

Alternate problem: What if a person has zero desire to put their faith in Christ? Then they probably really don't care if God chose them or not either. Only those who really want to be right with God care very much about this.

Predestination Election refers to individuals; predestination refers to intentions. God has predestined us for this, that or the other, in this case to *adoption*.

1:5 **Our adoption has always been a part of God's plan.** "Predestined" means marked out beforehand. This is another way of saying salvation is God's work and not our own doing. God has adopted us as his own children. He has brought us into his family and made us heirs along with Jesus. Adopted children have the same rights and privileges as natural children. The term "adoption" shows how strong our relationship to God really is. He is not just doing us a temporary favor; He has made us a part of His family.

Rom 8:15-17 NLT ¹⁵So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

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III. Our blessings are all the result of our redemption by the blood of Christ. 1:7-10

Ephesians 1:7-11 NLT ⁷He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

⁹God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. ¹⁰And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

Blood Atonement The people of Israel were forbidden to eat blood. If they killed an animal hunting they were to always drain the blood. When they offered their sacrifices, the blood was considered the most sacred part of the animal. In some cases it was all poured out on the altar.

Lev 17:10-11 ESV ¹⁰"If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and **I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.**

The blood of Christ points back to these Levitical sacrifices. His blood appeases the wrath of a Holy God, saves us from His righteous judgment and buys our freedom from bondage to sin and death.

1:10 **Universalism** The belief that all persons will eventually be saved and thus that no one will be eternally lost. There are two main types of universalism in the spiritual marketplace today.

A. **Pluralistic Universalism:** The view that sees all the world's religions as equally valid. Everyone will be saved because one faith is just as good as another. You believe in Jesus, others believe in karma. I believe in myself, to each his or her own. Jesus makes no difference.

This view falls short, not least because the various religions have different concepts of “being saved” and “heaven” to begin with. Some have no such concepts at all. We won’t deal with this right now, just in the interest of time. If you’d like to dive into that subject I recommend the apologetics/worldview class that starts in the fall.

B. Christian Universalism: This view says that everyone will ultimately be saved because of the work of Christ on the cross. Christ’s blood saves them whether they believe in Him or not.

(See C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion*)

When Paul says “all things” in v.10 he is not speaking about universal *salvation* of all people, but about the universal *sovereignty* of Jesus Christ. All authority has been given to Jesus Christ. All will one day declare His lordship.

Php 2:9-11 NKJV ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

But all will not automatically be saved as a result, because they will only declare His lordship when it is ultimately too late. For one thing, notice the phrase “under the earth” is present in the Philippians passage, but absent in our Ephesians passage. Further, there are plenty of passages like the following that the Christian Universalist must explain away.

Matt 25:41 NKJV *“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*”

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V. God will be supremely glorified when He gives us our complete inheritance. 1:11-14

1:14 **guarantee** or “down payment”

1:11 & 14 Notice the “already” of v.11 and the “not yet” of v.14. The NT is full of this tension.

1:13-14 This section is huge. Notice how Paul outlines the way of salvation for us:

1. The sinner (That’s us!) hears the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation.
2. We believe or trust in Jesus Christ.
3. We receive the Holy Spirit and are sealed forever as those belonging to Christ.
4. Go back to verse 1. We now have the right to be called saints! We are no longer guilty sinners in God’s eyes. Our identity is secure.
5. We are now in the position to carry out God’s plans for us – and the Holy Spirit empowers us to do just that.
6. This results in the greatest imaginable blessing for us as part of our inheritance.
7. It also results in the greatest possible glory to God. What could be better than that?

Finally, take note of how all three persons of the Deity play a part in this plan.

1. God the Father chose us to be holy (saints). He predestined us to adoption and to an inheritance in Christ.
2. God the Son secured our inheritance for us, by dying on the cross and paying the price for our sins. We now have the privilege of sharing in His resurrection life.
3. The Holy Spirit sealed us when we put our faith in Christ. His presence in our lives is the guarantee or down payment of our ultimate inheritance.

Conclusion:

God has certain desires for us that include blessing us beyond our wildest dreams. He is a wise and loving master. Yielding ourselves to Him brings Him the maximum possible glory and brings us the maximum possible blessing.

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